



SUB-COMMITTEE ON
RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS AND
SEARCH AND RESCUE
14th session
Agenda item 13

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REVISION OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR FLOAT-FREE SATELLITE EPIRBs OPERATING ON 406 MHZ (RESOLUTION A.810(19))

Submitted by Norway

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document proposes amendments to resolution A.810(19), based upon the report from the investigation committee after the tragic capsize of the Norwegian anchor handling vessel Bourbon Dolphin – LNUW, in April 2007, where 7 persons were lost
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	5.2
<i>High-level action:</i>	5.2.5
<i>Planned output:</i>	-
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 9
<i>Related documents:</i>	.1 MSC 86/26, paragraph 23.19; and .2 http://www.sjofartsdir.no/no/Aktuelt/Report-on-safety-measures-for-anchor-handling-vessels-and-mobile-offshore-units/

General

1 As instructed by MSC 86 the Sub-Committee will consider any relevant submissions on the revision of Performance standards for Float-free Satellite EPIRBs operating on 406 MHz (resolution A.810(19)).

Discussions

2 Bearing in mind the tragic accident of the anchor-handling ship **Bourbon Dolphin** – LNUW, that capsized 12 April 2007, with a loss of 8 persons, Norway would like to focus on some parts of the performance of the satellite EPIRB which – in the opinion of Norway, which need to be improved.

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3 The investigation concluded that even if the satellite EPIRB was located on the wheelhouse roof it failed to release and float up to the surface as intended. Fortunately, this was of no significance for the operation since there were many vessels in the vicinity. If the accident had occurred in areas without other vessels in the immediate vicinity, signals from the satellite EPIRB would have been of crucial significance for the rapid activation of rescue operations.

4 The investigation requested the Norwegian authorities to evaluate the location of the satellite EPIRB and the release mechanism.

5 The **Bourbon Dolphin** disaster shows that there is a need for improvements when it comes to the location and release functions of EPIRBs during capsizing. In order to ensure that a distress alert will be transmitted from a ship during distress incidents where there is no time to activate other distress alerting means, the Norwegian Administration is of the opinion that a ship should carry one satellite EPIRB on both sides of the ship, installed on the outer sides of either the roof of the bridge or on the bridge wings. This will increase the possibility of at least one of them floating up to the surface if the vessel should sink or capsize. If the satellite EPIRB can not be manually released (SOLAS IV/7.6.3) for such positions, a manually activated satellite EPIRB should be installed in – or close to – the wheelhouse.

6 The satellite EPIRB release and activation arrangements (resolution A.662(16)) should cover both sinking and capsizing. This can be achieved by a release mechanism that operates immediately when the satellite EPIRBs reach the surface, instead of “*before reaching a depth of 4 m in any orientation*”, as mentioned in section 2.1 of resolution A.662(16).

7 Further, satellite EPIRBs going down with the ship may float up to the surface at a later stage, provided they can keep watertight (resolution A.810(19), section 2.3.2) down to a depth of 50 metres instead of the present requirements of 10 metres.

8 The Norwegian “Report on safety measures for anchor handling vessels and mobile offshore units” may be downloaded from the Norwegian Maritime Directorate’s website at: <http://www.sjofartsdir.no/no/Aktuelt/Report-on-safety-measures-for-anchor-handling-vessels-and-mobile-offshore-units/>.

Action requested by the Sub-Committee

9 The Sub-Committee, when revising IMO resolution A.810(19), is requested to take into consideration the problems addressed in this document. The following sections of resolution A.810(19) should be amended as follows:

Annex – Part A, item

2.3 The satellite EPIRB should:

.2 be so designed that the electrical portions are watertight at a depth of ~~10~~ [50] m for at least [5] min. Consideration should be given to a temperature variation of 45 degrees Celsius during transitions from the mounted position to immersion. The harmful effects of a marine environment, condensation and water leakage should not affect the performance of the beacon;

.14 be provided with signals for locating by means of a search and rescue locating device (Radar SART and AIS-SART) or a 121.5MHz beacon primarily for homing by aircraft, or a combination of the mentioned methods.

2.6 The installed satellite EPIRB should:

- .3 be designed to release itself and float free ~~before~~ when reaching the surface ~~a depth of 4 m~~ at a list or trim of any angle.

10 In addition, the requirements for float-free release and activation arrangements should be included in the performance standard, by transferring revised items from resolution A.662(16), such as:

ANNEX, item 2

- .1 be designed so that the release mechanism should operate when reaching the surface ~~a depth of 4 m~~ in any orientation;
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